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Agenda item 8

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur: Mrs. Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

Addendum

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (item 3)

Note by the Secretary-General on the reform of the United Nations and its impact on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

1. At its 5th and 6th meetings, on 11 and 12 June 1997, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General on the reform of the United Nations and its impact on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (E/1997/5).

2. The Committee was informed that the Commission had developed a process of prioritization of the regular programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999. Pursuant to Commission resolution 553 (XXVI), an ad hoc working group open to all States members of ECLAC was established with the mandate to determine, in consultation with the Executive Secretary, the priorities of the programme of work of the Commission and to propose strategic orientations for its future activities. The first meeting of the ad hoc working group took place at Santiago from 29 to 31 July 1996.

Discussion

3. Delegations noted that ECLAC had begun to implement a set of reform and institutional development measures well in advance of the recent reform drive in the United Nations system. The reform and modernization efforts in ECLAC

included, inter alia, rationalization of the functioning of intergovernmental forums, strategic planning and training for medium and senior-level managers.

4. Delegations referred to the 2nd meeting of the ad hoc working group, held in New York on 5 June 1997, at which it reviewed the results of the priority-setting exercise and considered the outline on the new pilot management scheme to be implemented by ECLAC following consideration and approval by member States of the Commission, and taking into account the statements made by the members of the ad hoc working group during that meeting. Delegations noted that the main thrust of the pilot project was to decentralize authority in certain areas of human resources and budget management in order to improve efficiency and efficacy and to strengthen accountability.

5. Delegations expressed general support for the thrust of the reform efforts initiated by ECLAC and congratulated the Commission for being selected to initiate a pilot project on the new management scheme in the United Nations. Most delegations stressed that ECLAC continued to play a crucial role in the economic growth, development and regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

6. Delegations also expressed favourable opinions about the usefulness of the priority-setting exercise. Some noted that it should serve as an example to other regions. While expressing support for the reform measures being undertaken by ECLAC, including the priority-setting exercise, one delegation indicated that participants in the prioritization exercise would have benefited greatly from the provision of information on the financial implications of the various activities listed in the work programme of the Commission. It was emphasized that that information would have contributed to a greater correlation between stated priority activities and the level of resources allocated for their implementation.

7. One delegation emphasized the importance of ensuring the necessary adjustments to the programme of work of ECLAC, in keeping with the recommendations of the Committee contained in subparagraphs 184 (d) to (f) of its report on the second part of its thirty-sixth session.[1] That delegation also welcomed the current dialogue that Caribbean countries and the ECLAC Headquarters secretariat had embarked upon, with a view to exploring ways of addressing adequately the concerns and interests of the Caribbean subregion.

8. Some delegations informed the Committee that the representatives of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the countries of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region had met recently at Bucharest to discuss ways and means of enhancing cooperation in fields of common interest.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. The Committee took note of document E/1997/5.

Notes

[1] A/51/16 (Part II), to be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/51/16).